

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing information to a user from an information depository, the method comprising the steps of:
 - reproducing in the vicinity of each of a plurality of users, programs from one of a plurality of broadcast stations;
 - recording upon command by a user, an identification of a station and a time of a program on the station for which supplemental information is desired by the user;
 - entering the recorded station identification and time into one of a plurality of information exchange terminals;
 - coupling the information exchange terminal to the information depository to transmit information therebetween; and
 - identifying a correspondence between the entered station identification and time and a program in a station log to obtain the desired supplemental information.
2. The method of claim 1, additionally comprising the steps of compiling a station log of stations, program times, and program identifiers for programs on the stations and mapping the program identifiers in the log to supplemental information relating to specific programs.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the step of identifying a correspondence between the entered station identification and time to a program in a station log to obtain the desired supplemental information comprises the step of searching the station log for a station, program time, and program identifier of a program that corresponds to the entered station identification and time.
4. The method of claim 3, additionally comprising the step of outputting the obtained supplemental information.
5. The method of claim 4, in which the outputting step comprises printing out the information.
6. The method of claim 4, in which the outputting step comprises presenting the information on a display device.
7. The method of claim 3, in which the station log and the supplementary information are resident in the information depository, the method comprising the additional steps of:
 - transmitting the entered station identification and time from the information exchange terminal to the information depository;
 - obtaining from the information depository the supplementary information;
 - transmitting the supplementary information from the information depository to the information exchange terminal; and
 - outputting the supplementary information at the information exchange terminal.

1 8. The method of claim 3, in which the station log and the supplementary information are resident in the information depository, the method comprising the additional steps of:

5 transmitting the entered station identification and time from the information exchange terminal to the information depository; and

 merging the supplementary information into a charge card accounting statement.

9. The method of claim 4, in which the station log is compiled at the information exchange terminals and the supplemental information is stored at the information depository, the program identifiers are transmitted from the information exchange terminals to the information depository, and the supplemental information is transmitted from the information depository to the terminals.

10 10. The method of claim 4, in which the station log is compiled at the information exchange terminals and the supplemental information is stored at the information exchange terminals.

15 11. The method of claim 2, additionally comprising the step of transmitting program times and program identifiers from each station to the place of compiling the station log.

20 12. The method of claim 11 wherein the step of transmitting program times and program identifiers from each station to the place of compiling the station log comprises the step of transmitting the program times and program identifiers from each station in a SCA FM band.

25 13. The method of claim 11 wherein the step of transmitting program times and program identifiers from each station to the place of compiling the station log comprises the step of transmitting the program times and program identifiers from each station in a television vertical blanking interval.

30 14. The method of claim 1, in which the step of recording upon command by a user, an identification of a station and a time of a program on the station for which supplemental information is desired by the user, is performed by recording the station identifications and times in memory cards, each card having a clock and a plurality of keys on its surface, each key corresponding to a station, the method additionally comprising the step of placing over the keys a transparent overlay within an insert receiving pocket, the transparent overlay inserted in the insert receiving pocket and identifying the stations corresponding to the keys; and wherein the step of recording upon command comprises the step of recording the value of the clock and the key pressed by a user.

35 15. The method of claim 14 additionally comprising the steps of:
 coupling the card to an information exchange terminal;
 transmitting the stored station identification and time from the information exchange terminal to the information depository;
 obtaining from the information depository the supplementary information;

1 transmitting the supplementary information from the information depository to
the information exchange terminal; and

outputting the supplementary information at the information exchange terminal.

5 16. The method of claim 15, in which the step of coupling the card to an
information exchange terminal comprises the steps of:

reading from the card a data and time (DT1) representing the last time the card
was coupled to an information exchange terminal;

reading from the card the current time on the clock;

10 calculating the difference in time (T1) between the card clock time and time
read from a clock in the information exchange terminal;

calculating the difference in time (T2) between DT1 and the information
exchange terminal clock current time;

calculating the card clock error rate $T1/T2$;

15 applying the error rate to correct the stored time of the combination of station
identification and time;

setting the clock in the card to the correct time; and

storing the current date and time (DT1) into the card memory.

17. The method of claim 15, in which the outputting step comprises printing out the
information or presenting the information on a display device.

20 18. The method of claim 15 wherein the information exchange terminal comprises
an automated teller machine.

19. The method of claim 15 wherein the information exchange terminal comprises
a point of sale terminal.

25 20. The method of claim 14 additionally comprising the steps of:

coupling the card to an information exchange terminal;

transmitting the stored station identification and time from the information
exchange terminal to the information depository; and

merging the supplementary information into a charge card accounting statement.

30 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the information exchange terminal comprises
an automated teller machine.

22. The method of claim 20 wherein the information exchange terminal comprises
a point of sale terminal.

35 23. The method of claim 1, in which the step of recording upon command by a
user, an identification of a station and a time of a program on the station for which
supplemental information is desired by the user is performed by:

coupling a card having a memory to an apparatus for receiving stations, the
apparatus having a clock, a station selection controller, and a command key for commanding
the step of recording; and

1 storing into the memory of the card the station identification for selected station
and the time read from the clock whenever the command key is activated.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein the apparatus comprises a radio.

25. The method of claim 23 wherein the apparatus comprises a television.

5 26. The method of claim 23 wherein the apparatus comprises a remote controller.

27. The method of claim 23 additionally comprising the steps of:

coupling the card to an information exchange terminal;

transmitting the stored station identification and time from the information
exchange terminal to the information depository; and

10 merging the supplementary information into a charge card accounting statement.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the information exchange terminal comprises
an automated teller machine and further comprises the steps of:

assigning a unique identification symbol to each user;

15 printing the desired supplemental information on a statement that is unique to
the user; and

printing the user identification symbol on the statement.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the information exchange terminal comprises a
point of sale terminal and further comprises the steps of:

assigning a unique identification symbol to each user;

20 printing the desired supplemental information on a statement that is unique to
the user; and

printing the user identification symbol on the statement.

30. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of identifying a correspondence between
the entered station identification and time and a program in a station log additionally
25 comprises the step of recording the number of times a first program in the station log is
identified as corresponding to entered station identifications and times.

31. The method of claim 1 wherein the information depository comprises a
distributed and networked depository.

32. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of identifying a correspondence between
30 the entered station identification and time and a program in a station log to obtain the desired
supplemental information comprises the steps of:

mapping an entered station identification for a cable channel to a second station
identification by using a stored cable channel map.

33. A method for transferring information between a plurality of users and an
35 information depository, the method comprising the steps of:

recording on portable memory cards user responses and the time of each
response;

1 carrying the memory cards to information exchange terminals that have card receiving slots;

connecting the information exchange terminals to the information depository to transmit information therebetween; and

5 inserting the memory cards in the slots to transmit the combinations of times and user responses recorded on the cards to the information exchange terminals.

34. The method of claim 33, in which a plurality of responses and the time of the responses are recorded on the cards before the cards are inserted in the slots.

10 35. The method of claim 33, additionally comprising the step of transmitting to the information depository the responses and time of each response transmitted to a terminal.

36. The method of claim 35, additionally comprising the step of recording at the information depository the number of like responses.

15 37. The method of claim 35 additionally comprising the step of transmitting from the information depository to the information exchange terminals information relevant to the responses and the time of each response transmitted to such terminals from the cards.

38. The method of claim 37, additionally comprising the step of outputting at the information exchange terminals information transmitted from the information depository.

39. The method of claim 38, in which the outputting step comprises printing out the information.

20 40. The method of claim 38, in which the outputting step comprises presenting the information on a display device.

41. The method of claim 33, additionally comprising the step of reproducing in the vicinity of the card a broadcast from a radio or a television station, the responses being radio or television stations.

25 42. The method of claim 41, additionally comprising the step of compiling a log of stations, program times, and program identifiers of programs broadcast from the stations, mapping the program identifiers in the log to supplemental information relating to the specific programs, and transmitting to a terminal supplemental information relating to the program for the station and time recorded on a memory card inserted in the slot of the terminal.

30 43. The method of claim 42, in which the station log is compiled at the information depository and the supplemental information is stored at the information depository.

35 44. The method of claim 42, in which the program log is compiled at the information exchange terminals and the supplemental information is stored at the information depository, the program identifiers are transmitted from the terminals to the information depository, and the supplemental information is transmitted from the information depository to the terminals.

1 45. The method of claim 42, additionally comprising the step of transmitting program times and identifiers for each station from each such station to the place of compilation of the program log.

5 46. The method of claim 33, in which the card has a plurality of keys on its surface to record the responses, the method additionally comprising the step of placing over the keys a transparent overlay with an insert receiving pocket and placing in the pocket an insert that identifies the responses corresponding to the keys.

10 47. A system for ordering supplemental information about programs currently playing at a broadcast receiver having a controllable station tuner, the apparatus comprising:

means for controlling the station to which the tuner is set;

a clock for designating current date and current time;

manual input means for issuing a store command;

a memory; and

means responsive to the controlling means, the clock, and the manual input

15 means for storing in the memory data (SDT data) representative of the station to which the tuner is set, the current date, and the current time when a store command is issued.

20 48. The system of claim 47 wherein the means for controlling the station to which the tuner is set, the clock for designating current date and current time, and the manual input means for issuing a store command are integral to the broadcast receiver or a remote controller for the broadcast receiver, and the memory is integral to a card that is removably coupled to the broadcast receiver.

25 49. The system of claim 48 further comprising:

an information depository for storing the supplemental information;

means for communicating between the information depository and the memory;

and

means for mapping the SDT data read from the memory into the information depository to obtain the specific supplementary information about the respective programs represented by the SDT data.

30 50. The system of claim 49 wherein the means for communicating between the information depository and the memory comprises an automated teller machine (ATM).

51. The system of claim 50 further comprising means for outputting the supplementary data at the ATM.

35 52. The system of claim 50 further comprising means for merging the supplementary data onto an ATM accounting statement.

53. The system of claim 49 wherein the means for communicating between the information depository and the memory comprises a point of sale (POS) terminal.

1 54. The system of claim 53 further comprising means for outputting the supplemental data at the POS.

 55. A system for ordering supplemental information about programs currently playing at a broadcast receiver, the apparatus comprising:

5 a clock for designating current date and current time;
 manual means for issuing a store command designating a station on which the current program is playing on the broadcast receiver;

 a memory; and
 means responsive to the clock and the means for issuing a store command designating the station for storing in the memory data (SDT data) representative of the station to which the tuner is set, the current date, and the current time when the store command is issued.

10 56. The system of claim 55, in which the clock, the means for issuing a store command, and the memory are integral to a card having a plurality of keys on its surface, each for issuing a store command designating a particular station, the card further comprising a transparent overlay for placing over the keys and an insert receiving pocket for receiving the transparent overlay for identifying the stations corresponding to the keys.

15 57. The system of claim 55 further comprising:
 an information depository for storing the supplemental information;
 means for communicating between the information depository and the memory;
20 and

 means for mapping the SDT data read from the memory into the information depository to obtain the specific supplementary information about the respective programs represented by the SDT data.

25 58. The system of claim 57 further comprising means for outputting the supplementary data.

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